

My son is a special needs child, he always has been. Maybe it was because I could not afford food when I was pregnant, struggling to keep a roof over my head when the state was unable to help me with food stamps at that point or to help with my electricity bill. Maybe it was because I was really sick from an infection in the uterus, which had also been found on the placenta. I really do not know the reason of what has affected him this way. I do know that my family history has been riddled with mental disorders such as Dyslexia to a more severe instance of Acute Bi-Polar disorder.


My son is the largest child in his class; he sits on the ninety-fifth percentile of his height and weight in the national average. I have proudly given birth to a giant. Unfortunately, though he is a naturally sweet and loving boy, he was not a gentle giant when he started to go to preschool; he learned to rule his peers with brute force. This was due to the fact that he did not know how to communicate with others; he had been plagued with ear infections since the age of three months and his speech had been delayed two-years. We have corrected this through surgery and therapy and he is no longer just a giant but my gentle giant. I know now that there are some mistakes that I have made that have pushed his development back a little. I did not give him a pen or pencil to draw with until he was two and a half years old, he did not see a pair of scissors unless he was getting a hair cut and these were never in his own hands. These things have been corrected with time and Occupational therapy but some things have yet to be corrected.

My child learns "backwards" taking in the whole before he learns the little details of the words, the letters themselves. He can count to fourteen by rote while others of his peers can count to 100. When looking at a group of things he cannot automatically tell

you their number, my child cannot recognize his numbers when they are written. He has a team of people to help him learn: an occupational therapist, math tutor, reading coach, the principal is even included in this little circle. Though we cannot forget some of the others who help in his educational experience, music, library, teacher's aides, and computers and then of course the leader of them all, my son's kindergarten teacher. It is she who provides the very foundation from which the others work, and as she put it: "you would have to see this child to appreciate him." He is a very intelligent sweet little boy with learning and behavioral issues, the issues we, as a team, are still trying to narrow down to what is the cause of these things. We work closely with this team to help when and where we can with the meager resources that we can afford. With everything that he has to be taught to succeed, full day kindergarten is a must. My son is not alone in his plight, his search for understanding of the materials that he is being supplied, other children suffer from problems parallel to his. I cannot speak for other parents but personally, I think that until the "No-child left behind act" is abolished; full day kindergarten is a necessity otherwise children like my son will be left behind.

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